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TWIN SUICIDE BLASTS IN MOSQUES KILL 58 WORSHIPPERS IN PAKISTAN

A powerful blast ripped through a Balochistan mosque, killing 54; hours later, 4 persons died in an explosion at a Khyber Pakhtunkhwa mosque

SCORES INJURED, SOME IN CRITICAL CONDITION

The explosion at Balochistan occurred near Madina Mosque on Al Falah Road in the Mastung district when people had gathered in large numbers to celebrate the birthday of Prophet Mohammed. The suicide bomber blew himself up as rallies from neighbourhood mosques converged at a meeting point. Scores were injured and a few are said to be in critical condition | P17

ROOF OF MOSQUE COLLAPSES IN 2ND ATTACK

- A second suicide attack by two men at a mosque hundreds of kms away in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province led to a roof collapse that killed four persons
- No terror group operating in the region has taken responsibility for the twin attacks, though security officials suspect the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (the Pakistani Taliban) or the Islamic State group may be behind the explosions

500

PEOPLE HAD GATHERED IN MASTUNG WHEN THE SUICIDE BOMBER BLEW HIMSELF UP

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TRICHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Cauvery: K'taka to move SC, file review plea before CWMA

Authority upholds CWRC's directive to release 3,000 cusecs of water to TN

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE State Government has decided to approach the Supreme Court and also file a review petition before the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) against its directive to release 3,000 cusecs of water to Tamil Nadu till October 30. On Friday, the CWMA upheld the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee's (CWRC) directive to the State to release water to TN.

Speaking to reporters after holding a meeting with legal experts, including retired judges of the Supreme Court, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said Karnataka is not in a position to release water to TN and it will be explained. If needed, a special session of the legislative assembly will be called to discuss the issue. "If we do not follow the order purposely, only then it will amount to contempt of court," he added.

At the CWMA meeting in Delhi, Additional Chief Secretary (Water Resources) Rakesh Singh appealed to the Authority to consider the prevailing storage in the four reservoirs of Karnataka which is insufficient even for irrigation and drinking purposes. The State also appealed for a review of the directive of CWRC to release 3,000 cusecs of water to TN from September 29 for 15 days.

Tamil Nadu insisted on releasing 12,500 cusecs, including a backlog of 12.5 tmcft. After detailed deliberations, the CWMA directed to make good the shortfall of earlier directives and endorsed the CWRC directive to release 3,000 cusecs till October 15.

Soon after the CWMA's directive, Siddaramaiah said that under normal circumstances, Karnataka has to release 177.25 tmcft of water in a year. "We need 284.85 tmcft of water. The State received poor rainfall in August. The situation remains the same even this month. Tamil Nadu received rains in September. So far, 43 tmcft of water has flowed to TN," Siddaramaiah said. P4

MG Road wears a deserted look as Karnataka observed a bandh called to protest against the state government releasing Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu, in Bengaluru on Friday | SHASHIDHARA BYRAPPA

Can't stop releasing water: CM

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday said the State Government can't stop releasing Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu as it may amount to contempt of court and the government may be dismissed. P4

Talk to DMK, says BJP MP

Bengaluru South MP Tejasvi Surya on Friday suggested to the Congress government in the state to use its "friendship" with its I.N.D.I.A bloc partner DMK to resolve the Cauvery issue. P4

Bandh total, peaceful in Cauvery basin dists

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

THE Karnataka bandh called by Kannada organisations on Friday to protest against the release of Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu was successful and peaceful in the Cauvery basin districts, while it evoked a mixed response in other districts.

The Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industries stated that 70% of its members across Karnataka supported the bandh and noted that the loss to state exchequer was around Rs 400 crore by way of taxes.

Normal life was paralysed in Bengaluru, which witnessed bandh for the second time this week. Markets, shops, malls, hotels, theatres and other commercial establishments remained closed in the city. KSRTC and BMTC operated their services as usual, but the buses were not crowded. Except for some private vehicles, there were hardly any cabs and autos on the road. Major bus stations such as Kempegowda Bus Terminal wore a near-deserted look. The police detained 12 Kannada activists, who tried to enter the Kempegowda International Airport.

The police took 785 activists into preventive custody and did not allow them to take out a procession from Town Hall to Freedom Park. Leaders of Karnataka Rakshana Vedike and other Kannada outfits were picked up from different locations before they reached Town Hall and were taken to Freedom Park.

Vatal Nagaraj, the president of 'Kannada Okkoota', which had called for the bandh, was also detained. Clad in a burqa, Nagaraj criticised the police action and slammed the State Government for making Karnataka a "police state".

Kannada film fraternity also joined the protest under the leadership of senior actor Shivarajkumar. P4

Don't tinker with consent age, amend POCSO Act: Panel

SHRUTI KAKKAR @ New Delhi

THE Law Commission of India on Friday advised the government not to reduce the existing age of consent from 18 to 16 years under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, saying else it could provide a safe harbour to coerce minors into subjugation, marital rape and other forms of abuse, including trafficking.

The Act criminalises all sexual activity for those under the age of 18 regardless of mutual consent. To address the problem, the panel suggested giving limited discretion on sentencing to special courts in cases of mutual consent. Carving out a limited judicial discretion at the stage of sentencing by a special court is more reasonable if consent is established, it said. "It has to be further ensured that such a discretionary power is provided in such a manner that it is well guided and insulated from any potential misuse as far as possible. In this context, as to when such a discretion will come into play and who will determine if at all it applies, becomes relevant," the Commission said in its Report No. 283 titled "Age of Consent under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012."

Only a judicially trained mind can determine if the consent was indeed free from coercion, deception, fraud or influence, the report said.

The panel headed by retired Karnataka HC chief justice Ritu Raj Awasthi said lowering the age of consent would reduce the POCSO Act to a paper law. "The consent of a child is no consent and reading the same would be deeply problematic... The very real possibility of young girls being easily seduced in love traps and then sold off in trafficking cannot and should not be ignored. Any element of consent can be misused and may lead to children being at the mercy of adult abusers," it said.

'eFIR rollout to be in phases'

SHRUTI KAKKAR @ New Delhi

The Law Commission of India on Friday recommended for putting in motion the process for registration of online FIRs (eFIRs) in a phased manner saying that clinging on to an archaic system of lodging FIRs does not augur well for criminal reforms.

It suggested eFIRs for all cognisable offences where the accused is not known. In case the accused is known, it recommended permission for eFIRs for cognisable offences where the punishment is up to 3 years in jail. This would not only protect the accused from arrest but also mandate the police to adhere to guidelines regarding arrest laid down in Supreme Court rulings, the panel said. In case its recommendations are effective, the Law Commission suggested that states can expand the list of offences for which e-FIR may be registered. However, permitting eFIRs in all cases now would cause extremely high investigative burden on police, the panel reasoned.

UNSTOPPABLE NIKHAT

This was inevitable. Boxer Nikhat Zareen, a two-time world champion, achieved her long-standing dream of competing in the Olympics as she secured Paris quota with a dominant performance on Friday

MORE ON P15

PARIS QUOTA, RECORD HAUL

IT WAS A NOTABLE DAY FOR INDIA AT THE ONGOING ASIAD AT HANGZHOU WITH ATHLETES FROM MANY DISCIPLINES STEPPING UP. A LOOK...

BANG ON TARGET

Indian shooters kept up their rich run with five medals, including two gold. Palak was the standout as she topped the 10m air pistol women's final, finishing ahead of Esha Singh. The men's 50m rifle 3 positions team also won a gold with Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar going on to bag a silver medal. Shooters have amassed a total of 18 medals (a record) in the ongoing Asiad

FIRST ATHLETICS MEDAL

Kiran Baliyan won bronze in the women's shot put event on Day 1 of the athletics competitions. She hurled the iron ball to a distance of 17.36m in her third attempt

EXPRESS READ

HC holds all officials guilty in Vachathi rape case

CHENNAI: The Madras High Court on Friday upheld a 2011 trial court order convicting over 200 forest, revenue and police officials for raping tribal women and ransacking tribal habitations at Vachathi village in Dharmapuri district during a raid in 1992. P7

Situation in Imphal valley calm but tense

IMPHAL: The situation in Manipur's Imphal valley was calm but tense on Friday after a night of violence, including an attempt to attack the empty ancestral home of CM N Biren Singh here. Authorities relaxed curfew in Imphal East and Imphal West from 5 am to 11 am.

Canada figures in India-US talks

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, who is on a five-day visit to the US till September 30, said on Friday that the diplomatic row with Canada came up during his discussions with his US counterpart Antony Blinken a day earlier.

On Thursday, Jaishankar had met Blinken and discussed a range of issues including the key outcomes of India's G20 presidency and the potential of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor. Blinken and Jaishankar "emphasised the continued importance of cooperation ahead of the upcoming 2+2 Dialogue, in particular in the areas of defence, space, and clean energy", US Department of Space spokesperson Matthew Miller said. The 2+2 dialogue is a format of meeting between the two countries' defence and foreign ministers.

While the official statement issued by the US Department of State was mum on the controversy over the killing of a Canada-based terrorist, Jaishankar later confirmed that the issue was indeed discussed with Blinken and US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan during their meeting at the Foggy Bottom headquarters of the State Department.

Speaking at an event organised by Washington-based Hudson Institute, he said the US side shared its assessments on the whole situation and he explained at length about India's concerns. "Hopefully we both came out of the meeting better informed," he added.

Explaining India's concerns, he said Indian diplomats are unsafe in Canada. "They are publicly intimidated. And that has actually compelled me to temporarily suspend even visa operations in Canada," he added.